

REMARKS

Initially, Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for his indication of the allowability of the subject matter contained in claims 4 and 15. Applicants would also like to thank the Examiner for indicating the acceptance of the drawings filed with the present application on November 20, 2003.

In the outstanding Official Action, claims 1-3, 5-6, 10-11, 13-14, and 16-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,396,776 to KIM. Claims 1-3, 5-6, 10-11, 13-14 and 16-17 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP 2-154957 to KO. Claims 1-2, 5-6, 10-11, 13, 16 and 17 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,605,058 to KURACHI et al. Claims 1-2, 5-6, 10-11, 13 and 16-17 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,551,255 to ROTHFLEISCH. Claims 7-9 and 18-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over KIM in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,966,952 to MISAWA et al. Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over KIM in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,519,971 to KIM. The Examiner objected to claims 4 and 15 for being dependent on rejected base claims, but otherwise indicated the allowability of claims 4 and 15 if rewritten into independent form to include substantially all of the limitations of base and intervening claims.

Upon entry of the present Response, claims 1-20 will have been cancelled. In view of the cancellation of claims 1-20, Applicants respectfully submit that each of the above-noted objections and rejections is moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of each of the above-noted objections and rejections.

Claims 21-40 will have been submitted for the Examiner's consideration. Independent claim 21 recites subject matter similar to the combination of features previously recited in claim 4. Independent claim 28 recites subject matter similar to the combination of features previously recited in claim 15. Additionally, independent claims 37 and 40 recite subject matter similar to individual features previously recited in claims 4 and 15.

Applicants respectfully submit that no reference applied in the outstanding Official Action discloses the combination of features recited in new independent claims 21, 28, 37 and 40, at least for the reason that the Examiner identified similar subject matter in claims 5 and 14 as allowable. In this regard, Applicants note that each of claims 21, 28, 37 and 40 recite features similar to the features recited in claims previously indicated by the Examiner as containing allowable subject matter.

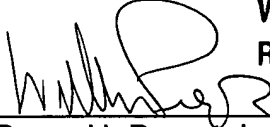
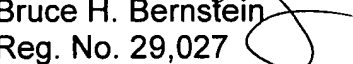
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request an indication of the allowability of new independent claims 21, 28, 37 and 40. Applicants additionally request an indication of the allowability of each of claims 22-27, 29-36 and 38-39 at least for depending, directly or indirectly, from an allowable independent claim, as well as for additional reasons related to their own recitations.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Any cancellation of claims or addition of new claims in this amendment, which has not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this Response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,  
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January 5, 2005  
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